

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /080 W
-----083853 061311Z /53

P R 061148Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8292
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USICA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USMISSION USUN NY

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SOPN, PEPR, SY, LE
SUBJECT: SYRIAN PRESS BEATS DRUMS FOR LEBANESE MOVE SOUTH

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: SYRIAN PRESS TO TAKING UPBEAT VIEW
OF SARKIS-ASSAD TALKS. AL-THAWRA OF JUNE 4 HEADLINE:
"POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE DOMINATES LEBANESE AREA. LEBANESE
ARMY PLACED ON ALERT FOR ENTRY INTO THE SOUTH. PLO
DECLARES COMMITMENT NOT TO PLACE MORE OF A BURDEN ON LEBANON'S
BORDERS THAN THEY CAN BEAR."

2. TWO FRONT-PAGE EDITORIALS APPEAR IN AL-BAATH AND AL-
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THAWRA ABOUT THE TALKS ON SATURDAY, JUNE 3, SIGNED BY
THE RESPECTIVE EDITORS. BOTH EDITORIALS STRESS THE
NEED FOR ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE THE EXTENSION OF
LEBANESE AUTHORITY TO THE SOUTH AS PREREQUISITES FOR
REBUILDING LEBANON. BOUTH TAKE POSITION THAT THIS CALLS FOR
DISPATCHING LEBANESE ARMY UNITS TO THE REGION. AMID AL-
KHULI, WRITING IN AL-BAATH, ASSERTS THAT FOLLOWING THE

ASSAD-SARKIS MEETING THERE ARE GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM THAT LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS AND INTRA-LEBANESE RELATIONS WILL ENTER A NEW PHASE "WHICH WILL SERVE AS A BASIS FOR POSITIVE POLITICAL ACTION ORIENTED TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF NATIONAL OBJECTIVES."

3. THAWRA EDITOR AHMAD HAJJ ALI IS MORE EXPLICIT IN DEFINING SYRIAN VIEWS. HE SEES THREE NECESSARY PREREQUISITES FOR LEBANON'S WELL-BEING:

- A) CONSOLIDATION OF LEBANON'S UNITY;
- B) INSURING THE LEGITIMACY OF LEBANON'S GOVERNMENT WHICH HINGES UPON THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL ARMY AND EQUAL APPLICATION OF THE LAW TO ALL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS; AND
- C) OBTAINING ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SOUTH, WHICH HE SEES AS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR ATTAINING THE FIRST TWO POINTS.

4. HE THEN OPINES, "IT IS HIGH TIME LEBANON ITSELF SHOULD LEAD THE BATTLE FOR ATTAINING THESE OBJECTIVES. TO THIS END PRESIDENT SARKIS WILL LAY DOWN THE CRITERIA FOR NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO ALL FACTIONS AND WILL JUDGE THEIR RESPONSES IN TERMS OF THEIR QUALITY AND QUANTITY." HE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT SARKIS WILL HAVE SYRIA'S FULL BACKING IF HE PROCEEDS THIS WAY. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN LOU. COMMENT: ASSAD SEEMS TO BE ADDING HIS PER-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SONAL SUPPORT AND PRESTIGE TO IDEAS OF MOVING LEBANESE ARMY FORCES TO THE SOUTH. PRESS IS INDICATING THROUGH ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS THAT PALESTINIAN ARE EXPECTED TO COOPERATE. THRUST OF EDITORIALS IS THAT IF SARKIS CAN SUCCESSFULLY EXTEND GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY TO THIS REGION, SYRIAN WILL EXPECT ALL PARTIES (AND MOST PARTICULARLY THE LEBANESE FRONT) TO GIVE HIM THEIR COOPERATION IN BRINGING ABOUT NATIONAL CONCORD AND ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION. PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DAMASC03252
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780236-0101
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780693/aaaadbvl.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4b1a6e91-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2480993
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRIAN PRESS BEATS DRUMS FOR LEBANESE MOVE SOUTH
TAGS: SOPN, PEPR, MARR, MPOL, SY, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4b1a6e91-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014